



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

GREEN AND SIDGWICK ON THE COMMUNITY OF THE GOOD.

THE doctrine that the true Good is necessarily common or non-competitive in character is not new to ethical thought. For its first expression we should need to look far back. But it has gained an added importance for English students through the emphasis with which it was held and defended by T. H. Green, and the no less emphatic criticism brought to bear on it by Sidgwick. This paper will be chiefly devoted to a discussion of the question as it has been left by these rival leaders of English ethical thought; but it may be worth while in the first instance to refer to some earlier phases of the theory.

We have provisionally referred to the theory as a single one; but on closer examination we find that it may be held in two somewhat different forms, corresponding to the terms 'common' and 'non-competitive.' The idea that the true Good is necessarily a *common* Good might be said to be the master-thought of Greek ethical reflection, and it has been enforced anew by Hegel and his successors. But it is possible to hold that the good life can only be a life in which others share, a life of reciprocal service and benefit, and yet to stop short of the conception of the Good as something that cannot be the subject of competition, as necessarily raised above all conflict of individual interests, and so *common* in the strictest sense. The idea is not radically different in the two cases; but the added precision and sharpness of the latter form of the theory renders it especially open to criticism.

And as the theory may take two forms, differing in precision if not in substance, so it may be reached by two different lines of argument which, in analysis at least, can be distinguished. The first is the line of thought already referred to as especially characteristic of Greek ethics, — that a man can only find his true manhood in a community which claims his allegiance and his service, and that it is only as citizens, bearing all the responsibilities and restraints of citizenship, not as private and isolated units,

that men can participate in the Good. By surrendering the pursuit of private gain or inclination to share in the public burden, the individual citizen makes himself heir to the whole riches of the life of the body politic ; by sacrificing his immediate good, he becomes the possessor of the true Good.

The second argument belongs in its full development to a later period, although it appears in the teaching of the Cynics and influences certain aspects of the thought of Plato. It sets out from the conception of the Good as strictly inward and personal, as so entirely a matter of a right attitude of the soul that outward goods are indifferent or negligible. And if this view of the Good as depending entirely on the inner life of each man be consistently held, there can clearly be no question of a conflict of interest in its attainment. It is non-competitive because its seat is in the breast of each man, secure from the effect of outward influences. This line of thought carries the doctrine to its full length, in claiming for the true Good an absolutely non-competitive character ; but in order to do so, it is forced to give a narrow and rigoristic, or Stoical, account of the Good. Thus those thinkers who have been unwilling to carry the Stoic type of moral philosophy to the length of paradox, have often reinforced the argument from the essential inwardness of moral good or Virtue by an appeal to the social character of man as a moral being. In other words, the two arguments which we have distinguished have been as a rule combined and blended.

We find this fusion of the two lines of thought in both the Stoic and the early Christian ethics. The main reliance of the Stoic was placed on the second argument, for he never tired of emphasizing the inwardness of Virtue and its accessibility to all, — “*Rex est qui posuit metus*,” — the wise man alone is truly happy, wealthy, and regal. But to this negative view of the community of the Good, he added the positive conception of the essential brotherhood of all true followers of Wisdom, whatever their station in life, nationality, or outward circumstances. So also in Christian thought there has been a constant, or at least a recurrent, tendency to disparage external and competitive goods in comparison with the Good which is inward and inalienable

“Having nothing, yet possessing all things,” the early Christians submitted to be despoiled of their outward possessions without feeling that anything of real value had been lost; but they also added a positive conception to the negative one. For they realized much more vividly than the Stoics themselves the Stoic principle of the brotherhood of man; and their keen sense of solidarity made them feel that any true good gained by one member of the community was of benefit to all.

When we turn to modern ethics, we at once find the principle that the true Good is common at the centre of a great ethical system,—that of Spinoza. His treatment of this point is so striking as to call for a few quotations, even if we are led by them into an apparent digression. Spinoza sees in the passions the great divisive forces of human nature, while it is by Virtue and the pursuit of the true Good that men are bound together. Thus he holds that “in so far only as men live in obedience to reason do they always necessarily agree in nature.” And “the highest good of those who follow virtue is common to all, and therefore all can equally rejoice therein”; for “to act virtuously is to act in obedience to reason, and whatsoever we do in obedience to reason is to understand; therefore the highest good to those who follow after virtue is to know God, that is a good which is common to all and can be possessed by all men equally in so far as they are of the same nature.” “This love towards God cannot be stained by the emotion of envy or jealousy; contrariwise it is the more fostered in proportion as we conceive a greater number of men to be joined to God by the same bond of love.” For “this love towards God is the highest good which we can seek for under the guidance of reason, it is common to all men, and we desire that all should rejoice therein.”¹

In the teaching of Spinoza on this point, there may be traced an expressed or implied *a priori* argument from the unity of Reason to the unity, and hence the non-competitive character, of the true Good. To a thinker who believes firmly in the unity of Reason, especially in its highest ethical and social manifestations, it may well seem incredible that its demands on different moral beings

¹ *Ethics* (Elwes's trans.), Pt. IV, props. xxxv, xxxvi; Pt. V, prop. xx.

should be ultimately conflicting, or should in the end produce anything less than a thorough and organic unity of all. But if this mode of thought, to which we shall have occasion to refer again, is present in Spinoza, yet his advocacy of the theory that the true Good is non-competitive gains a great part of its persuasiveness from the fact that he himself had sought and found satisfaction, not in outward possessions where one man's gain is another's loss, but in that "acquiescence of spirit" which he felt all might share if they would, and each be richer for the wealth of his neighbor.

In the ethics of Kant, as in the Stoic philosophy, we find the inwardness of true Good so firmly insisted on that it is an obvious inference that in respect of it no conflict of interests can occur. From the formal and subjective point of view, the Good is not competitive. But Kant also suggests, though he does not work out, a positive application of the same principle by his conception of a 'Kingdom of Ends,' in which each member shall legislate for himself and all others, and the wills of all shall be in complete harmony. In this idea of the common character of the Good, the widely diverse systems of Kant and Spinoza show a striking agreement. Spinoza holds that every man who follows after his own good according to the guidance of Reason necessarily acts in harmony with all other good men; while Kant passes straight from his principle of the 'Autonomy of the Will' to the idea of all good (*i. e.*, autonomous) wills as necessarily coöperating and harmonizing in a 'Kingdom of Ends.' For both thinkers the morality of a principle and its universality (in the sense of capability of being willed by all moral agents) are practically equivalent terms.¹

When we come to the philosophy of T. H. Green, we find that his doctrine of the non-competitive character of the Good does not differ essentially from Spinoza's, though it is worked out in the *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book III, chapters iii and iv, from the historical point of view. He shows how, from the rudest beginnings of human society, men have been impelled to pass beyond

¹ Cf. R. A. Duff, *Spinoza's Political and Ethical Philosophy*, p. 130; also ch. xi, "The Good as the Principle of Sociality."

the mere attempt to gratify their immediate desires, and to seek the good of a larger and more permanent body, with whom they have identified themselves, whose interests they have made their own. "The man cannot contemplate himself as in a better state, or on the way to the best, without contemplating others, not merely as a means to that better state, but as sharing it with him."¹ And this idea of a Common Good acquires the force of an imperative, nay, is the foundation of all obligation, as against every momentary inclination. "There is an idea which equally underlies the conception both of moral duty and of legal right . . . the idea of an absolute and a common good; a good common to the person conceiving it with others, and good for him and them, whether at any moment it answers their likings or no."² The satisfaction for which man seeks is an abiding satisfaction, but on this very ground it is one "which no man can contemplate as abiding except so far as he identifies himself with a society whose well-being is to him as his own."³ The society with which he so identifies himself may at first be limited in numbers; but such is the strength of the advancing principle of sociality that finally he is bound to recognize in every man or woman one who has at least a potential claim on his respect and his service. Thus "the extension of the area of the Common Good" proceeds towards the ideal state, in which every moral agent shall be looked on as an end in himself, and as entitled to share in that Common Good. Further, Green finds that men, by identifying themselves with the interests of a family or society, came "with more or less distinctness to conceive that permanent welfare of the family, which it was their great object to promote, as consisting, at any rate among other things, in the continuance of an interest like their own; in other words as consisting in the propagation of virtue."⁴ Here we have the idea of a good of character, of an inner good, of desert. "And the recognition of desert is in itself a recognition of a moral and spiritual good, as

¹ *Prolegomena*, § 199.

² *Ibid.*, § 202.

³ *Ibid.*, § 232, end.

⁴ *Ibid.*, § 242.

distinct from one sensible or natural.”¹ And now, Green proceeds, “we have the beginning of that education of the conscience of which the end is the conviction that the only true good is to be good.”²

Now whether or not we accept all the steps of Green’s argument, considered as a genetic account of the origin and extension of the idea of the Common Good, it is important to notice that he traces in the process by which this idea is developed both the elements or moments which at the outset we found to be involved in it; he emphasizes both the necessity for each man to pass beyond himself that he may contribute to and participate in the good of a body of his fellows, and also the growing inwardness of ethical thought which leads to the exaltation of an inner, and hence non-competitive, good as alone ultimate. And he sums up his argument in the words: “The one process is complementary to the other, because the only good in the pursuit of which there can be no competition of interest, which is really common to all who may pursue it, is that which consists in the universal will to be good,—in the settled disposition on each man’s part to make the most and best of humanity in his own person and the persons of others. The conviction of a community of good for all men can never be really harmonized with our notions of what is good, so long as anything else than self-devotion to an ideal of mutual service is the end by reference to which these notions are formed.”³

Such, in outline, is Green’s theory of the common nature of the Good. Sidgwick’s criticisms of it are to be found in the posthumously published *Lectures on the Ethics of T. H. Green, Mr. Herbert Spencer, and J. Martineau*. It was natural that he should single out this theory for special notice; for he freely admits its attractiveness, especially in its avoidance of the difficulties raised for the hedonist by the conflicting claims to happiness of different individuals. “I cannot,” he says, “be accused of underrating these difficulties; in fact it was a main object of that part of my treatise on *The Methods of Ethics* which deals with hedonistic method to

¹ *Op. cit.*, § 243.

² *Ibid.*, § 244.

³ *Ibid.*

bring them into full view. If Green can consistently maintain an 'idea of a true good' that 'does not admit of the distinction between good for self and good for others,' his system will in this respect have a fundamental superiority over Hedonism."¹

The acknowledgment here made regarding the merits of a theory of ethics which conceives the good as non-competitive is a striking one; and it may be worth while to ask, before considering in detail Sidgwick's objections to Green's 'proof' of the principle, whether, on the lowest estimate of the strength of this proof, an idealistic ethic has not "in this respect a fundamental superiority over Hedonism." For a philosophy such as Green's, Goodness in the sense of purity of character and devotion of will is the true end of life; and no refinement of criticism can permanently obscure the significance of this quality, considered not merely as an abstract attitude of the will, but as rightness of will expressing itself in character and action. It may be hard to define, but its existence and influence are felt, and felt as something *sui generis*, whenever it is present. Now, while pleasure is to a limited extent self-propagating, yet the enjoyment of one individual often rests on pain suffered by another, or by reaction causes pain to the same man at a later time. Goodness, on the other hand, is not limited in this way. It is cumulative for the individual and contagious in its tendency to pass from one to others. Thus, when we take it in a wider sense, because nearer to the concrete reality of experience, than that of the abstract Good Will, the 'Good Character' still has an advantage over Pleasure in its more common, less competitive, nature; and, as Sidgwick himself suggests, has *pro tanto* an advantage as the ethical End.

But, returning to Sidgwick's specific criticisms, we may for the sake of clearness distinguish between the two arguments on which he lays the chief stress, although in themselves they are closely related. The first argument is that Green's treatment of Justice, and his repeated use of the terms 'self-sacrifice' and 'self-renunciation,' show that he cannot consistently carry out the principle that the true good is non-competitive; and the second, that he could not defend the principle at all, if he did not oscillate between a wider and a narrower conception of the Good.

Sidgwick first examines Green's treatment of Justice, and his description of the just man as one who "will not promote his own well-being or that of one whom he loves or likes . . . at the cost of impeding in any way the well-being of one who is nothing to him but a man." This description, Sidgwick argues, "implies that the promotion of one's own well-being or that of one's friends may really involve the cost of impeding the well-being of others : otherwise what need of this resolute impartiality ? It implies, in short, that Good, as implied in the notion of benefit and well-being, does really consist, at least to some extent, in objects that admit of being competed for, though Green's theory of a true Good denies this."¹ Similarly, in regard to 'self-sacrifice,' Sidgwick asks : "What, in strictness, can such a man be said to 'sacrifice' when he is seeking his own greatest good with true insight, and with the knowledge that his true good cannot lie in 'objects that admit of being competed for' ? What 'sacrifice' is there in giving up things that are no sort of good to one ?" And he concludes : "In all this I seem to find . . . pagan or neo-pagan elements of ethical thought — in which the governing conception takes the form of self-regard — combined with Christian or post-Christian elements, without any proper philosophical reconciliation of the two."²

Now when we examine this formidable charge regarding the supposed element of neo-paganism in Green's position, we find that it hardly amounts to more than this, — that the sphere of the moral life, in which alone the Good Will becomes actual and operative, is one in which material 'goods' and their distribution play an important part. It would be pedantic to refuse to allow a thinker to use the term 'good' or 'benefit' of these things because he held that the 'true good' was ultimately of a higher order. Such an idea as that of Justice must be wrought out in the midst of existing conditions, in which most men hold very frankly that 'goods' are both material and competitive. Nor does Green refuse to speak of "good things of the body,"³ though their

¹ Pp. 66, 67.

² P. 68.

³ *Prolegomena*, § 243.

goodness may be "merely relative," when they are compared with "good things of the soul." And so when Sidgwick challenges Green "to reconstruct the conscientious man's notions of justice and injustice, and show us exactly what they come to when the distinction between good for self and good for others is eliminated,"¹ it is enough to answer that Green says repeatedly and explicitly that we cannot so construct in detail the ideal state, in which all men would live for the good of others as for their own. Doubtless in it 'justice' would be transformed or transcended. But under present conditions it is only by 'faithfulness in the unrighteous mammon' that the 'true riches' can be gained or even their existence made apparent to a sceptical world.

Similarly, in regard to self-sacrifice, Green is certainly as far from holding that this involves the sacrifice of man's *ultimate* good as any other thinker who believes that life must be lost in order to be saved. But it seems little more than a play on words to assert on this ground that 'sacrifice' means "giving up things that are no sort of good to one." Surely 'sacrifice,' in its ordinary sense of giving up inclination, leisure, immediate and proximate goods of many kinds, is an intelligible term even in the mouth of an idealist. And Green has recorded his belief that in an ideal society, though self-sacrifice might no longer be needful in the forms which we know, yet there might still be "demands for the rejection of possible pleasure" and need for the "self-devoted will."²

But it is the second of Sidgwick's criticisms which is most important and penetrates furthest. If, he argues, Green takes seriously the position that the only true or ultimate Good is to be good, and that this is so entirely an inward and personal matter as to be wholly non-competitive, he is not entitled at a later stage of his argument to introduce the wider ideal of the Good as the realization of all the capacities of man's nature. If the good will includes "the will to know what is true, to make what is beautiful," Sidgwick asks, "is it not idle to tell us that the idea of a

¹ *Lectures*, p. 67.

² *Prolegomena*, §§ 276, 302.

true good does not admit of the distinction between good for self and good for others, and that a man's true good does not consist in objects that admit of being competed for, — so long as the material conditions of human existence remain at all the same as they are now?" "Virtue, no doubt," he continues, "and the highest virtue — though not every particular virtue — admits of being exercised under any external conditions of life ; but the faculties that find expression in the art $\ddot{s}$ and sciences — no."¹ If, on the other hand, self-realization is taken as the end, by what right can a man be called on to sacrifice in his own case those æsthetic and intellectual faculties which Green in some passages includes as part of the Good? Or rather, if it is even possible that the individual may be called on to sacrifice, not only enjoyment, but also opportunities for self-development in these directions, how can it be said that the Good, which admittedly includes development, is non-competitive? ²

This argument is summed up in a sentence in which Sidgwick charges Green with allowing "his thought to swing like a pendulum between a wider and a narrower ideal of true good, sometimes expanding it to Culture, sometimes narrowing it to Virtue and the Good Will. When he thinks of full realization of human capabilities, he brings in the development of artistic faculties and the cultivation of taste, as well as the development of scientific faculties and the pursuit of knowledge of all kinds ; when he wants to bring out its non-competitive character, we find it shrunk to virtue and goodness of will." ³

Thus Sidgwick states a dilemma : either the non-competitive ideal, which is essentially the same in its Stoic, ascetic, and Kantian forms ; or the Hellenic ideal, including that manifold development of human capacities which was comprised under the conception of ἀρετή. The first is non-competitive, — *common* in the strictest sense, — but empty of content ; the second has content and breadth, but it is common only to a limited extent. And we must make our choice between the two, for they are alternatives which cannot be combined.

¹ *Lectures*, p. 69.

² Pp. 70 n., 95.

³ P. 71.

Now there seems little doubt that Green would not have accepted this presentation of the question as final. He would probably have classed Sidgwick's dilemma as an instance of the "either . . . or" of the abstract understanding, and have sought to answer it in orthodox Hegelian fashion by a "both . . . and." For we have seen that his argument involves both the contributing elements which we distinguished at the outset, and which Sidgwick insists are mutually destructive. And Sidgwick's own argument seems to involve a double assumption, — both that the Good Will, whose non-competitive character he admits, is a "will that wills nothing"; and conversely, that those intellectual and æsthetic faculties, whose cultivation is necessary to the full development of human nature, and which the Greeks included in the wide conception of ἀρετή, are necessarily self-regarding. Now we have already seen, in discussing Sidgwick's remarks on Green's idea of Justice, that the former assumption is out of harmony with the general trend of Green's thought. Even in the 'Kantian' passage already quoted, he defines the good will as "the settled disposition on each man's part *to make the most and best of humanity* in his own person and the persons of others,"¹ — thus combining the two thoughts which Sidgwick insists can only be held apart. The good will finds its sphere of action among "things which admit of being given and taken";² and even in self-sacrifice there is a positive moment and purpose, — the extension to the whole of society of those opportunities of a rich and varied life which were, even in the best days of Greece, the privilege of a minority.³

From the other side, it is a groundless assumption that "the will to know what is true, to make what is beautiful," is necessarily self-regarding. It may be no less altruistic, no less responsive to the claims of the Common Good, than the more obviously practical and philanthropic forms of public service. For the 'community' of the Good must not be taken as excluding variety, if we would avoid the 'excessive unification' which Aristotle criticised in the Platonic Communism. There should

¹ *Prolegomena*, § 244.

² *Ibid.*, § 256.

³ *Ibid.*, §§ 270–273.

be many different tones in the harmony of the common will. As Green says, the Common Good "may be pursued in many different forms by persons quite unconscious of any community in their pursuits."¹ And again, "we are justified in holding that it could not be attained in a life of mere scientific and artistic activity, any more than in one of 'practical' exertion from which those activities were absent."² The movement for social reform during the nineteenth century could ill have spared Ruskin, William Morris, or Watts. Now this recognition of diversity of function no doubt implies that some lives will be more fruitful in enjoyment, that some will be wider and richer than others; but this does not affect the essential matter, which is that each man, looking neither to self-sacrifice nor to isolated self-development as the true end, should seek to find and to pursue that calling which will enable him to make the most valuable and necessary contribution to the general Good. In an early essay on Matthew Arnold, Sidgwick himself admitted the necessity of the two classes of service spoken of by Green, and their complementary character in so far as they promote the same wide ends. "The religious man, obeying the instinct of self-sacrifice," and "the man of culture seeking self-development," alike believe that they are following the highest good. And yet "each dimly feels that it is necessary for the world that the other line of life should be chosen by some."³ Thus may various aptitudes work together for a common end. And from this point of view the most vital distinction for ethics is not that between self-sacrifice and self-development, but between the use of gifts and capacities of whatever nature for the common Good and for private gratification. This is the distinction between the greatest art of the fifth and of the fourth century in Greece, — between Phidias, bending all the strength of his genius to express perfectly and finally in a great statue or a great temple the ideal character of Athens as it was apprehended by her noblest sons; and Praxiteles, dedicating the statue of Aphrodite, which was accounted his masterpiece, to the glorification of his mistress.

¹ *Op. cit.*, § 283.

² *Ibid.*, § 288.

³ *Miscellaneous Essays and Addresses*, pp. 45-6.

On some such lines Green would probably have worked out his answer to the question of the relation of the intellectual and artistic faculties to the strictly moral good, as he intended to do in a later work.¹ The difference between his position and that of Sidgwick in regard to this question might be summed up by saying that Sidgwick considers the Good, at least in the case of intellectual or artistic pursuits, to consist in *acquisition* or *enjoyment*, whereas for Green it is essentially *contribution*, or acquisition only as a means to fuller contribution. Thus Green says in one description of the good man's attitude of mind: "The thought of his well-being will be to him the thought of himself as living in successful pursuit of various interests which the order of society . . . has determined for him"; and these interests are directed to "objects which, when realized, take their place as permanent contributions to an abiding good."² This point of view of contribution might be illustrated by the motto of Watts's picture, *Sic Transit*, — "What I spent I had: what I saved I lost: what I gave I have." Or, to take a more strictly philosophical illustration, it is the principle of the Platonic legislator, seeking to ensure that every citizen should make his own proper and individual contribution to the Common Good, to the end that he should not follow his own private inclinations, but become serviceable in the welding together of the state.³

When we look at the question from this point of view, and consider the Common Good, neither as merely abstract, nor as involving a dead and monotonous level of uniformity, but as concrete and requiring the most varied contributions, intellectual and artistic as well as practical, the dualism between the principle of Community and that of the wide realization of human capabilities has largely disappeared. And if it should be objected that the standpoint of contribution as opposed to acquisition is too exalted to be generally adopted or maintained, one may reply

¹ See *Prolegomena*, § 290 and editor's note. This later work was, of course, never written; and it is only fair to remember, in criticising this part of Green's system, that it is admittedly incomplete.

² *Ibid.*, § 234.

³ *Republic*, 519E (cf. 420B), "ποιῶν μεταδιδόναι ἀλλήλοις τῆς ὠφελείας, ἣν ἂν ἕκαστοι τὸ κοινὸν δύναται ὥσιν ὠφελεῖν, κ. τ. λ."

that it is certainly a high conception ; yet it is none the less exemplified, not only in the heroism of the patriot or the martyr, but in the daily life of every man who sees in his work a means of making some definite, though perhaps inconspicuous, contribution to the public good. And the fact that such an attitude is far from universal can hardly be used as a disproof of the principle involved. For what ethical principle is there which does not transcend its application by average men and women? We may, indeed, admit that under present conditions there are many to whom no opportunity is, so far as we can judge, afforded of reaching the level of ethical development at which such a rule of life becomes possible or even conceivable. But this is because the principle of the Common Good is still far from complete realization ; and in such realization moral influences would be so diffused that no man whose mind was open to receive them would fail through lack of the necessary ethical stimulus and guidance.

As we are now approaching the close of our argument, it may be well to review its chief results. At the outset, we saw that the doctrine of the common and non-competitive nature of the Good could be based immediately and certainly on the idea of the true Good as wholly inward, as consisting entirely in an attitude of will. But it is at once apparent that this result is reached by depriving the idea of Good of its concrete content and riches. It gives a theory, logically conclusive, but practically unsatisfying, since the Good Will only becomes actual and operative in its relation to and effect on the objective world. The question was thus suggested, whether this ideal of the Good *Will* as common, could be combined with the Greek ideal of the good *life*, taken in the concreteness of experience, as essentially a *social* life, and thus a life from which the private standpoint, the standpoint of competition, is excluded ; and we saw that Green's argument did indeed combine these two ideals. We saw further that such an attempt to combine the two elements in the complete idea of the Good as common and non-competitive has a solid basis in fact ; for the very concreteness and variety of this complete idea makes it necessary that not only the practical life of

self-sacrifice, but the contemplative and artistic life, should be pressed into the service of the Common Good.

But just because the idea is concrete, because it has passed beyond the region of the Kantian 'Metaphysic of Ethics,' and begun to find embodiment in the real world, it follows that we must not expect to find it fully developed and explicit in the sphere of experience. We are dealing with a developing principle, not with an empirical generalization. And thus the principle appears both as an ideal and as an imperative. That Green looked on it in this light, and not as a mere induction from existing facts, appears clearly at several points in his argument. "The idea of the good," he tells us in one passage, "is primarily a demand. It is not derived from observation of what exists, but from an inward requirement that something should be."¹ And in another he says that, with the first undeveloped idea of a common good, "there is given 'in promise and potency' the ideal of which the realization would be perfect morality, the ideal of a society in which every one shall treat every one else as his neighbor, in which to every rational agent the well-being or perfection of every other such agent shall be included in that perfection of himself for which he lives."²

Now the difference between the positions of Green and Sidgwick on this whole question is in the last resort a difference as to the validity of a principle reached in this way. Sidgwick would probably refuse to accept any principle which could not be made good by an "empirical criterion," such as he desiderates in a slightly different connection;³ while Green is eager to follow out those indications of the principle of the Common Good, which he finds by reflection on the facts of the moral life (though not, indeed, by simple induction from them). Thus it may be argued that Green's ready acceptance of the principle as possessing ideal validity causes him at some points to underestimate the difficulty of establishing it by observed facts; and on this point we may allow that Sidgwick's criticisms⁴ have a certain force. In par-

¹ *Prolegomena*, § 230.

² *Ibid.*, § 205.

³ *Lectures on T. H. Green*, p. 71.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-8, 77.

ticular, Green seems to consider the "extension of the area of the Common Good" as a more direct and unbroken process than it has actually been, and to overlook the difficulty mentioned by Sidgwick, that conflicts frequently occur, not only between egoistic and altruistic interests, but between a wider and a narrower altruism.¹ In Green's favorite instances, the family and the state, there arises a frequent conflict between the nearer and the more remote obligation, as well as between obligation and mere individual interest. But if we admit that Green minimizes such difficulties, owing to his belief in the possibility and value of the principle of the Common Good as an ideal, we must at the same time acknowledge that Sidgwick's suspicion of any such ideal viewed as an ethical principle causes him to take too unfavorable a view of the actual evidence for that of the Common Good. Even if a *complete* empirical proof is unattainable, we cannot disregard such considerations as the readiness of men in all ages to identify themselves absolutely with the Common Good in some great crisis, to the point of giving up life itself for the sake of country or religion. And not in such extreme instances alone is devotion to the Common Good exemplified. It may, as we have seen, be the ruling motive in the life of the scholar or the artist, as well as in that of the humbler citizen who does his work steadily and earnestly, seeing in it his proper contribution to the general interest. Finally, there is the fact of the self-propagating character of goodness in whatever rank or calling it appears.

The final question, then, comes to be: Is it possible to accept the principle of the common and non-competitive character of true Good, as an ideal, *i. e.*, a normative and regulative principle, based on the facts of the normal and social life, but pointing beyond any actual past or present fact to an ever more complete realization? That such principles are possible and necessary is surely implied in the claim of ethics to be a 'normative science,' — and, if normative for the individual, then why not for the community and the state? Moral philosophy claims to be more than a mere inductive study of 'the phenomena of the moral consciousness,' and more than sociology, though it uses the results of both.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

And if this claim is to be substantiated, it can only be by the establishment of such a principle and its use as a criterion to test existing social institutions. To such considerations, Sidgwick would probably have replied that, "when we abandon the firm ground of actual society we have an illimitable cloudland surrounding us on all sides, in which we may construct any variety of pattern states; but no definite ideal to which the actual undeniably approximates."¹ It is, indeed, true that Utopias have differed in every possible detail; but, as we have seen, Green disclaims all intention to construct a detailed Utopia;² his endeavor is to establish a principle to which the ideal state must conform, and by which it may be recognized as ideal. Now it might surely be shown, that in spite of all divergences as to the exact form of the 'pattern state,' no moral philosopher would refuse to accept as a necessary characteristic of such a state the principle of the Community of the Good. Whatever else might be present or absent, there would at least be secured to every member of the community that power to share in his degree in the good which he helps to create; while, on the other side, no such member would be used simply as an instrument to forward the designs or the pleasures of others. The use of men and women as instruments for the promotion of a good in which they have no share, which is the disgrace of modern Industrialism as it was of the ancient society founded on slave-labor, would be replaced by the willing self-sacrifice for the Common Good which is the moralization of human instrumentality.³

Now in this double condition,—that each moral agent should be a participant in the good of the whole community, and that no such agent should be made the instrument of the ends of others unless he first makes them his own by free consent,—we have, in truth, the principle which we have been discussing in its positive and its negative forms. But if we can trace a gradual, though slow and often arrested, development of this principle in the progress of human society; if we can consider the fullness of its realization as in itself a criterion of progress; and if we are assured

¹ *The Methods of Ethics* (sixth ed.), p. 22.

² *E. g.*, *Prolegomena*, §§ 202, 247.

³ *Cf.* § 247, end.

that its full development would inevitably be reached in this ideal state, — then it has indeed the highest ethical validity, the validity of a supreme regulative principle. In the words of Kant, it “has therefore objective reality, not as referring to an object of intelligible intuition (which we cannot even conceive), but as referring to the sensible world, conceived as an object of pure reason in its practical employment, and as a *corpus mysticum* of rational beings dwelling in it, so far as their free-will, placed under moral laws, possesses a thorough systematical unity both with itself and with the freedom of everyone else.”¹

G. F. BARBOUR.

PITLOCHRY, SCOTLAND.

¹ *Critique of Pure Reason* (Max Müller's trans., 2d. ed.), pp. 648–9. I cannot omit a reference to the passage, too long to quote here, in which Dante discusses the doctrine of the common nature of the true Good, *Purgatorio*, Canto XV.